

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Cuban Fiasco Charged to CIA

By Drew Pearson

The tragedy of the Cuban freedom fighters points directly to one of the most mysterious, most powerful agencies of government—Central Intelligence.

Sitting on a bluff overlooking the gorge of the Potomac River above Washington, this so-called "super-duper spy agency" is just as aloof in actual operation as in its location. Its members don't have to answer to Congress. Its accounts are not scrutinized by the General Accounting Office. In fact, its personnel is not even known. Not merely CIA agents but even CIA stenographers are required not to reveal their identity.

Every other department is required to publish the number of its personnel and the names of its personnel. But not Central Intelligence. Every other department of Government is required to give an accounting to Congress of funds spent before it gets more money. Not Central Intelligence.

Established after the war to engage quite frankly in espionage and undercover activities, Central Intelligence is a necessary offshoot of the cold



Pearson

important achievements. It has also let the U. S. A. in for some tragic defeats.

No Checks or Balances

Because of these defeats, there's growing sentiment on Capitol Hill to make Central Intelligence just as answerable for an accounting as any other agency. In a government of checks and balances which has done a pretty good job through the years, Central Intelligence is the only bureau not subject either to check or balance.

In the Cuban fiasco, Central Intelligence began working on an invasion by exiles long before Mr. Kennedy entered office. Cuban volunteers were secretly trained and equipped in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Those trained in the Florida Everglades were dissident groups financed by American corporations whose property was seized by Castro. They got no CIA help.

The invasion was first scheduled for last November, but President Eisenhower considered it proper to check with the man who was to succeed him, and when he outlined the plan to Mr. Kennedy, the latter seemed taken aback. He did not say anything against going ahead, but Mr. Eisenhower sensed that he might be opposed, so held up the invasion.

announcement, the day after his election, was the reappointment of Allen Dulles, brother of the late John Foster Dulles, as head of Central Intelligence. This was influenced by the CIA plan to back the Cuban exiles' invasion of Cuba.

There is no criticism on Capitol Hill of the idea behind the plan. There is great criticism of the manner in which it was carried out.

Some exiled leaders argued strongly against a direct invasion, wanted to have small groups infiltrate the Escambray Mountains instead. But the CIA was committed to the original invasion plan. It proceeded as planned.

Serious Fiasco

Actually the invasion was more of a fiasco than generally reported. The CIA had hoped for a mass uprising. Again some exiled leaders warned that Castro had won the loyalty of the peasants with food, land and medicine, that they wouldn't revolt.

American destroyers protected the landings but never participated in the actual action. The invading Cubans ran into the overwhelming superiority of Castro's militia and were driven back into the sea from three beachheads. They executed a Dunkirk-like evacuation, again with American destroyers stalling off the eyes of the world.

during the landings, took no direct part in the evacuations. They merely stood by.

Only one landing force reached its objective. This force has now joined the guerillas in the Escambray Mountains. The other landing forces were largely evacuated, though several were left behind. Many are probably casualties; the others possibly have fled to the mountains.

The whole episode can only be described as a CIA fiasco. Our cloak-and-dagger boys have been playing a grim game with the lives of Cuban freedom fighters, many of whom have now been abandoned. One reason President Kennedy is now considering more direct intervention is the moral obligation we owe to the freedom fighters we left behind.

The Cuban failure comes on top of some other CIA failures which have contributed seriously to this country's lessened prestige abroad.

The most tragic was the U-2 flight on the eve of the Summit Conference; probably the worst conceived piece of espionage in American history. A previous U-2 flight had been spotted by the Russians in April, so they were sure to be ready for the next one. It was the CIA which decided on the May flight—a flight which humiliated the United States in the eyes of the world.

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Behind the Errors On Cuban Invasion

By Marquis Childs

THE LONG train of errors that has led to the current critical phase of the Cuban tragedy suggests the need for a thorough re-examination of the whole approach to a world in the midst of revolutionary change.

If the errors were confined to Cuba, which is a very special case growing out of a long and complicated relationship 90 miles from the American coast line, this might not be so serious. But the same errors of appraisal and understanding have been evident in other trouble spots where revolutionary change has been confronted with the claims of the status quo.

Egypt, Iran, certain South American countries and even Japan, in the case of the violent demonstrations of last summer, may be cited. The tendency is almost always to overestimate the status quo, the condition of things as they are or as we feel they should be, against the force of revolutionary change.

TO ONE observer there appear to be three main reasons why this is so. They are:

1. The emphasis on military strength solely as military strength, considered apart from the condition of the country and the state of mind of the people. The Central Intelligence Agency, in which military influence has long been important, and the multiplicity of intelligence reports that funnel through the Pentagon seem to fall into the error of counting guns and tanks as though a census of the number of divisions in being were proof of the stability of a country.

2. The close relationship of the representatives of the United States in these countries with those who speak for the status quo and often to the exclusion of spokesmen for the forces of change. Perhaps this is inevitable. Where the forces of change have been captured by communism and linked to the Communist conspiracy it is obviously too late. But the effect has often tended to create a one-sided vision shutting out a large part of the political-social spectrum.

3. The exile mentality. Ever since the Russian revolution of 1917 and increasingly in the past two decades exiles have influenced American policy and the American appraisal of critical situations. These are in most instances patriotic, dedicated, freedom-loving men and women. But by the very terms of exile they are more likely than not to be wrong in their estimates of what is happening in their former homeland. And quite understandably they want to believe that the present situation is a deviation from the normal course of events which will be corrected or can be thrown.

These factors were all evident in the chain of events leading to the latest developments in Cuba. With full propaganda impact Castro had divided the big estates and the sugar plantations, he had nationalized much of industry and made big promises, he had opened up beaches and private clubs hitherto reserved for the few. While serious economic shortages began to develop, as it proved difficult or impossible to market Cuba's sugar, nevertheless when the attempt at overthrow began the Castro propaganda lever could be turned onto the threat of "They're going to take it all away from you."

THIS CHARGE was substantiated with the allegation that many of those participating in the so-called invasion had been adherents of the hated Batista regime. Do you want to go back to Batista? This was also a powerful propaganda line, as many Cuban exiles had warned that it would be.

Even in the matter of counting weapons there may have been a miscalculation. With an estimated 400,000 men in Castro's militia if only 10 to 15 per cent remained loyal and used their arms, supplied by the Communist bloc, in defense of the regime any but a full-scale invasion would be in difficulty—granted, of course, that the other 85 or 90 per cent were simply passive.

In Iran, where some observers believe "another Cuba" is possible in the not-too-distant future, the same elements in a somewhat more complex combination, are evident. The American effort, since the nationalistic movement represented by Mohammed Mossadeh was repressed, has been directed at persuading the Shah to introduce a minimum of reform. Instead corruption, phony elections and an increasingly severe repression have persisted. No one will say whether an explosion can be prevented.

In Egypt the forces of nationalism were grossly underestimated and the authority and capacity of old pieces in the puzzle, such as the Suez Canal Co., were correspondingly overestimated. Wishful—hopeful—thinking may be in part the explanation. But whatever the reason these miscalculations have been costly in the extreme.

CIA Expected To Lose Some Top Functions

By John G. Norris
Staff Reporter

Senate Majority Whip Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) predicted after a meeting with President Kennedy yesterday that the Central Intelligence Agency will be shorn of some of its major functions.

He told newsmen that he believed the CIA, which has been under sharp criticism in connection with the Cuban invasion failure, will be confined to gathering and evaluating information.

Others, Humphrey said, probably will be made responsible for recommending what the United States should do in a particular situation, and carrying out any undercover operations. These activities now are conducted by CIA in addition to its intelligence work.

A special task force headed by Gen. Maxwell B. Taylor, USA, (ret.) is reviewing the Nation's para-military activities — including intelligence and undercover activities — and will recommend changes in about two months.

"Miscalculation" Denied

Meanwhile, a top U. S. official denied there was any CIA intelligence "miscalculation" involved in the failure of the Cuban invasion. This official, giving a version of what occurred that differed completely from any that has been passed to newsmen by other high — and equally anonymous — Government sources, said:

There was no misjudgment of the general temper of the Cuban people or the control that Premier Fidel Castro's security police had over the country.

Quite accurate information was passed to the White House as to the military strength of the Cuban army, navy and air force.

Other officials have said privately that intelligence errors contributed greatly to the failure of last week's invasion attempt. They declared:

• That both the CIA and the Cuban rebels underestimated Castro's police state controls, which prevented local uprisings, and the prospects of such a popular overthrow of the regime.

• That the Castro military forces hit the rebel beachhead with more planes, tanks and other modern arms than the United States believed they had and moved more swiftly than had been estimated.

Picture Left Unclear

Yesterday's denial of the earlier statements of top officials left the picture unclear. President Kennedy gave advance notice of what was coming in this respect last week. He assumed full responsibility for the American actions, but declined to go into detail about them.

He said, however, that "I think that the facts of the matter involving Cuba will come out in due time," and that newsmen would be receiving "a lot of background briefings" by "interested people or interested agencies" and "I think you will be informed."

However, it appears that it will take the report of Taylor task force to provide anything definitive in the confusion that has resulted so far.

Silent on Invasion Role

While defending the accuracy of CIA intelligence estimates, the official who briefed newsmen yesterday had nothing to say about the part the agency or other U. S. services may have played in supporting the rebels.

Much admittedly went wrong in the military execution of the invasion, regardless of the accuracy of the intelligence. Whether this was due solely to the deficiencies of the Cuban rebels themselves is not entirely clear. There have been reports that the CIA either helped stage-direct the operation or played an advisory role in its execution, and must share some of the blame for the failure.

Some critics of the CIA have felt that its dual role of gathering and evaluating intelligence data and at the same time carrying out various types of undercover operations in foreign countries are incompatible.

Others have urged that its operations be supervised by a Cabinet committee or other high level agency of the Executive Branch. And there have been those who advocate the creation of a joint congressional watchdog committee to oversee CIA activities. Today, four subcommittees of the Senate and House Armed Services and Appropriations Committees review its budget and activities, but the screening is very limited.

The Hoover Government Reorganization Committee recommended in 1955 that Congress consider establishment of a joint committee to oversee the CIA somewhat like the present Joint Atomic Committee supervising the secret activities of the AEC. A resolution sponsored by Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), now Senate Majority Leader, to create such a committee, was voted down 27 to 59, the following year. One of the 27 who voted for it was Sen. John F. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Explains Algeria Situation

The Government official who discussed CIA intelligence reports on Cuba yesterday, also talked about the intelligence warning received about the revolt of the French generals in Algeria. He said the United States was caught by surprise, but so was French intelligence. Both the CIA and French intelligence were well informed about the dissatisfaction of the generals with President de Gaulle's policies, the official said, but did not anticipate the actual revolt coming when it did.

He said it is very difficult to predict such a decision to act, taken in secret, and that there is some indication that the generals moved earlier than they really were prepared to. Plans had been betrayed.